

EDUCATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
AND
COLLEGE LIFE AT OBERLIN.

Inaugural Address

OF

PRESIDENT J. H. FAIRCHILD,

DELIVERED AT

THE COMMENCEMENT OF OBERLIN COLLEGE,

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ADDRESS.

THE trust which you commit to me, Fathers and Brethren, is one of gravest importance, and if I were obliged to feel that it must fall on me alone or chiefly, I could not accept the responsibility. The Fathers under whose fostering care the work has been carried on these thirty years and more, are still spared to us. The habit of looking up to them for counsel and encouragement, indulged through many years of connection with the College as pupil and teacher, must cling to me still ; and while they live and labor here it will be a relief to know that the burden rests first on them. Under such genial shade it has been my privilege and joy thus far to live and work. God grant me the privilege for many years to come.

In the others associated with me in the common work I find abundant ground of confidence. The harmony absolutely unbroken in the past will continue in the future. Each will take his part of the burden, and make that easy for all which it would be impossible for one to bear alone. This mutual confidence and co-operation has been hitherto a pillar of strength. We have every promise of its continuance. Those added to our number by recent appointment are men of the same spirit. They have been tried here and elsewhere, and have not been found wanting.

The principle and habit of good order, and of earnest life among our students, furnish another source of satisfaction and assurance. In past years the young people collected here have entered into the spirit of the enterprise with a generous appreciation of the efforts and intentions of their teachers, and have thus made the abundant labor more a pleasure than a burden. Our students of to-day show the same spirit, and we shall not look in vain for their co-operation in any movement that tends to wholesome discipline and success in study.

The people of the place who came at the outset to sustain the

enterprise have not failed to show a cordial interest in the welfare of the school. Without their hearty co-operation no success could have been achieved. Their influence has always been on the side of good order, and has added strength and character to the general movement. The feeble colony which in the beginning embraced the College has grown to a thriving and wide-spread village; but the same cordial good-will remains, and proves an invaluable auxiliary in the discipline of the school.

Such aids as these greatly lighten the responsibility of the position you assign me, and give some degree of assurance to one who finds little ground of confidence in himself. With God's continued favor the work will go on and prosper.

Oberlin College is now entering upon its second generation, one-third of a century having elapsed since the foundation-stone was laid. During this period it has borne a prominent part in the work of Christian education in the West, and in addition has contributed its share to the solution of some special problems, educational, social, political, ecclesiastical and theological. The general work has always been made paramount, and other interests have been admitted only as they seemed to grow out of the work, or to promise some help toward the grand result. It is doubtful whether an equal amount of educational work was ever performed by any other school in the country during the first generation of its existence. This will not be regarded as a boastful claim, for no human foresight generated the forces by which this result has been accomplished. The first annual catalogue presented a preparatory or high school, with a total attendance of one hundred young men and women, and contained the expression of a hope, on the part of the sanguine founders, that advanced classes would be formed and furnished with instructors, as the progress of the pupils should require, until all departments, preparatory, collegiate and theological, should be fully organized. To all human wisdom this was an extravagant expectation, but in one year or a little more from that time, every department was in full working order, with classes in every stage of advancement, even to the senior theological year.

The work began thus with a vigorous impulse, and has continued until now with little, if any, abatement of interest. There have been changes from time to time in the outward form of the activity, but the resultant movement has been ever the same.

This rapid growth indicates great energy in the forces which gave the school its form. The men who imparted the first impulse were themselves examples of intensity of character, and came to the work glowing with the revival heat of those years. The early colonists and students partook of the same spirit. To the young people who came in large numbers from their Eastern homes to the school in the wilderness, it was essentially a missionary enterprise. Thus the work itself was an inspiration. There was everything to do—a great opportunity to those who had a mind to work. The very difficulties to be overcome roused the energies to the highest endeavor. Every tree that fell, every house that rose, was a sign of progress, and left the impression that patient labor must achieve results. This was but the beginning. A year later there came upon the field the man who, more than any other, had been in the front of the great religious movement that had swept the land, himself instinct in every fibre of his being with the spirit of aggressive Christian work. His magnetic power was alone sufficient to move the little community to intensest action. But he was not alone; there came with him men of like spirit, fit associates for the great enterprise—men that were alive to every promise of improvement, and ready for every well-directed advance. At the same time the students of Lane Seminary, charged with the electricity of the approaching anti-slavery tempest, came in upon us; and others, who smelt the battle from afar, gathered to the scene. Here was a magazine of living energy; would it be smothered and suppressed by the overhanging forests, or go off in some mild explosion for lack of scope for beneficent action? By those not in the spirit of the movement sometimes one result was predicted and sometimes the other, but neither occurred. There was plenty of rough work to be done that engaged all the physical energy that could be brought to bear—forests to extirpate, houses to build, a rugged soil to subdue, roads to construct, and a college to rear. All these were done; but these were not enough. So much earnest life could not exhaust itself in mere material advancement. The moral elements were moved to their profoundest depths. The narrower the field, the deeper and more thorough was the culture. As there was little material without upon which spiritual activity could employ itself, it was turned inward upon the work of self-improvement. The individual Christian life was thoroughly an-

alyzed, all its possibilities and liabilities canvassed, and many blessed experiences resulted, transforming and energizing the life and character.

At the same time great intellectual activity prevailed, especially in the domain of religious thought and philosophy. Questions in theology and morals, theoretical and practical, were brought forward and discussed with as much earnestness as if they had never been examined before. Unanimity of opinion by no means came from oneness of purpose. The reasons were demanded and given, and were accepted or rejected with complete and conscientious freedom. Professor and student, pastor and colonist, stood on the common platform and exercised the common right. No doctrine was accepted because it was old, or rejected because it was new. Possibly the presumption was held to be in favor of the new, but the old never yielded without a vigorous struggle. These oscillations of opinion never transcended the limits of orthodox belief. The law and the testimony settled every difference ; but the *standards* were sometimes disposed of with most irreverent freedom.

It was not possible that all the vitality of the place should be expended at home. The outer world was somewhat rudely jostled in various quarters by the activity which originated here. Anti-slavery lecturers sallied out to summon the faithful to the latter-day crusade. Preachers who had accepted the old gospel with a new baptism, went forth proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ. Every student, going to his winter's school, became a propagandist of the new ideas ; and thus was the world's quiet disturbed. The old Whig and Democratic parties that had divided the vote between them as their rightful heritage, found, one evening, upon return of an election, that Oberlin religion had meddled with politics. The experience was distasteful, and there was serious talk at the county seat of summary vengeance upon him who was supposed to be the head and front of this offending ; but better counsels prevailed, and the meddling continued until the County and the State and the nation had accepted the idea. Young men who had seen the College spring into a vigorous life from a small beginning, naturally inferred that a like thing could be done again ; and flourishing schools in Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky, all modeled after the original, are

the growing fruit of their conviction and their persistent labor. It is doubtful whether so many enterprises of the kind ever before emanated from a single centre in a single generation.

The young preachers who went forth with the suspicion of heresy upon them, were not always welcomed to established pulpits and comfortable livings ; but there was always room in the "regions beyond." Home missionary aid was hesitatingly and sparingly extended, but congregational churches, almost the only possible churches for an Oberlin minister to found in those times, were established "in advance of all others." In many cases they were only known as abolition churches and Oberlin churches, and years elapsed before they were embraced in any "healthy organization ;" but in the interval between the Albany Convention and the Boston Council, they were generally received into the common fellowship.

The aggressive movement extended even beyond the boundaries of our own land, planting missions among the Indians of the Northwest, the freedmen of Jamaica, and in Western Africa ; besides reinforcing other missions already planted. To sustain and extend these operations, a missionary association was organized, an instrumentality providentially raised up for the special gospel work of our time—the elevation of the freedmen of our own land. To a great extent, this association has found its missionaries among the young men and women trained here.

In a school thus kept in sympathy with the great movements of the day, it was impossible that the call of the country, in the hour of its peril, should not meet an earnest response ; and so we parted with our young men, in scores and hundreds, glad of the spirit of Christian patriotism that was in them, and sorrowing most of all that the faces of many of them we should see no more.

Thus during the years past the work has gone on among us, primarily a work of Christian education, but an education charged with energetic, aggressive life, acting in many points upon the interests of the outer world. As the immediate numerical result, our catalogue presents the names of 243 who have taken the Theological course, 502 who have graduated from College, and 392 who have completed the Ladies' course of four years, in all 1,137 graduates ; and some *fifteen thousand* others who have enjoyed the

advantages of the school for a single year or more. Of such results it is proper to make grateful mention. The work has been arduous, carried on with limited means, and in the face of formidable difficulties, but always full of interest and yielding a rich reward. There is no higher honor than to be called to share in such labor.

But it is not so much my purpose to speak of results as to call attention to the somewhat unusual style of college life which has sprung up in connection with our work, and which has characterized our school down to the present time. The earnest, aggressive spirit of the enterprise has to a great extent pervaded the body of our students—the spirit of work—an apprehension that there is much to be done in the world and that they are to help. An interest in the vital questions which agitate society, and a sympathy with human life in its varied aspects, have in general prevailed among them. College life, with us, is not peculiar, occupied with its own exclusive interests, pursuing its own separate schemes, and governed by its own code of duty and of honor. Each student belongs still to the world, not isolated from its sympathies and obligations and activities. The ends he pursues are such as appeal to men in general, the reputation he desires is the same that will serve him in the work of life, and the motives to excellence are the natural motives which operate on men at large. The student still shares in the responsibilities of common life, and is here for the purpose of a better outfit for the work before him.

The prevailing spirit shows itself in the discipline and order of the school. Our work in this respect has often been a wonder to ourselves. Notwithstanding our large numbers, ranging for thirty years from five hundred to a thousand in attendance, with a governing force entirely inadequate to close personal surveillance, and without any effort to realize so close a supervision, we have been favored with an unusual degree of good conduct, of fidelity in duty, and interest in study. The instances calling for disciplinary notice have been comparatively rare. A word from a teacher in the way of private suggestion has in general proved sufficient. Among the multitude of new-comers in the lower departments it is not so rare to find one who affords no promise of a successful course, and who before the close of his

probation is furnished with a permanent leave of absence, but in the regularly organized classes of the College and Ladies' Departments, numbering from two to four hundred in constant attendance, such an event has probably not occurred on an average more than once in five years. In one instance at least a period of ten years or more passed without a single exclusion from these classes. It is not because grave offences against order and propriety have been overlooked. They have not appeared. A year has often passed without a single case calling for disciplinary attention on the part of the Faculty. The general sentiment in favor of good order is a powerful restraint, even upon the wayward. The earnest and manly attitude of the pupil puts him in sympathy with the purposes and aims of the Faculty, securing mutual confidence and good-will. The somewhat prevalent antagonism of feeling between students and the governing authorities of the College has scarce ever appeared among us; nor have we been afflicted with that unclean spirit called *honor* among students, under which gross misdemeanors sometimes find shelter. The relations between students and Faculty are such as result from mutual respect for each other's feelings, and a common interest in a worthy object. The associations of teachers and pupils are characterized by a democratic freedom, sometimes a little startling to those accustomed to a different style, but very enjoyable to those who are in the spirit of it. The fashion of outward demonstrations of respect, appropriate enough in themselves, but not always significant, has not greatly obtained among us, but the reality has been our permanent satisfaction.

No monitorial system of surveillance and report has been found necessary. Each pupil reports his own success and fidelity in conforming to the required order. False returns are, doubtless, sometimes made, but the system tends to educate and establish the true sense of honor. An evasion of duty is not reckoned evidence of manliness, nor even of smartness.

No use has been made of the system of grades and honors, nor even of prizes. Our marking system is for the more definite information of teacher and pupil, not for public use. Each student finds his position under a free public sentiment; his natural ability, his success as a scholar, and his social and moral qualities, all blending to give him the position and influence that belong to

him. The plan does not secure the intense emulation which under another system stimulates a few while it fails to reach the many ; but the principle is more diffusive, appealing to every one with nearly equal force, and thus perhaps it may be quite as effective and beneficent. The danger of personal jealousies and bitterness is almost wholly averted, and the motives which excite to endeavor are such as will operate on the man when he takes his place in general society. Thus he is training for his work.

Under the prevailing College sentiment the relations of classes to each other have been universally wholesome and generous. No hereditary feuds exist among them. No freshman was ever *hazed*, no sophomore ever *rushed*. The class feeling is sufficiently strong to secure unity of interest and hopeful action, and to make a centre of pleasant associations and memories ; but the minor perturbations of college life, intense in proportion to their insignificance, vindicating the prerogative of cane or hat, have found no place. No college rebellion has ever arisen among us. Earnest dissent from college arrangements has sometimes been expressed, but always in a spirit of reason and subordination, ready to accept if unable to convince. Secret societies, shaping by their powerful underworking college life and politics, have not been known among us. It is true they have been prohibited by authority. So they have been elsewhere, and still have come into being. They do not seem to be the natural product of student-life here.

In a word, the type of college society and influence realized among us is like that of well-ordered general society, in the relations that subsist, and in the influences it generates. Students here are still members of the community at large, and share in its interests and responsibilities. The irregularities which occur are of the same kind as those which may occur in any well-ordered community, and are not the disorders peculiar to a university town. These facts, thus briefly stated, seem to indicate some unusual arrangement of educational forces, yielding a result, in our judgment, as desirable as it is perhaps unusual.

It may be supposed at first thought that these acknowledged advantages of manly spirit and of college order have an offset—that such an intimate sympathy with the outer world, involving a share in the duties of common life, must be a drawback upon successful study. It is not an unnatural thought that concentration upon study requires seclusion, and that ordinary college life, tak-

ing the student out from society, into a distinct community devoted to the single purpose of study, affords the conditions of highest success. But in effect a new society is thus instituted, making equal if not greater demands upon the thought and attention of the student. The excitements of ordinary college society are not less, probably greater, than in ordinary life. The matters of interest are not of themselves of weighty concern, but they take the place of weighty matters. A community of students must have something to expend their excitability upon, aside from the regular order of study. If the interests of the country are excluded college politics will take their place, and the little community is more deeply stirred by the election of a president of a literary society than of a president of the Republic. It is even questionable whether the presence of graver matters would not consolidate the character, and dispose to a better use of time and opportunities. Study will be effective in proportion to the motives which induce it, and he who lives in sympathy with the movements of the world and feels its claims is most likely to give himself earnestly to a preparation for his work.

But if there were an actual expenditure of force required to maintain an interest in these graver matters, it is by no means clear that the expenditure would not be wise. The College is a place for education, not merely for the acquisition of learning. If a knowledge of books were the only requisite, perhaps a cloister would be better than a College. But the great object is such a discipline as qualifies for service in the world. Learning has its place, but it is to be contemplated as an instrumentality, not an end. Successful education must give power, and must use study for the development of power. This power comes from generous impulses and noble aims, a knowledge of men and a feeling of their wants, a knowledge of God and sympathy with his work. A human mind charged with learning but without any kindling of soul toward God or toward man, is not a power. The simplest heart that loves God and pities men is mightier far. No one ever questions that a pervading religious influence is essential in any desirable system of education, and he who is educated apart from such a moulding force, lacks a prime element of power, not to speak of the great loss to his own heart and character. A similar power attaches to the living interests of the world to impress and energize the student. Humanity and religion alike are needed to stim-

ulate and inspire to generous action. It cannot but be desirable that these forces should operate upon the character, during this moulding process of education. Without this there must be a loss, and there is danger that it will become permanent. That style of student life which shall most naturally keep open the channels of sympathy with the great interests of the world, at the same time that it brings the faculties under rigorous discipline, must be the true ideal. Thus the forces which act upon the character in its formation are the same that will prevail through life, the normal forces of society. The student naturally grows into the life he is to live, and his work comes upon him, but not as a strange and new experience, but simply as an enlargement of the life he has already lived.

Is it not possible that the special forces peculiar to the College for stimulating to study may be overdone—that the energy called out by intense competition will fail when these special forces are withdrawn? When the student leaves College all the old motives peculiar to his student life cease to operate. He must build up habits of labor on a new foundation. There is danger that he will not readily respond to these new motives, and that his power of accomplishment will vanish when the impulse that moved him is withdrawn. There is a popular notion, whether well or ill founded, that those who, under the high pressure of college life, have stood foremost as scholars, often disappear from view, and lose their ambition and their power when the support on which they have leaned is withdrawn.

I may be permitted to express our satisfaction in view of the results here attained. It has seemed to us that the ideal of generating a working character in our pupils has been, during the years that are past, in some degree realized. We do not flatter ourselves that there have been no serious shortcomings, and that there remains no room for improvement. In many cases our hopes of individuals have not been met, and many of the imperfections incident to a new enterprise have marred the work. But with all these abatements, there is occasion for grateful recognition of divine favor, and encouragement to go forward in the maintenance of whatever of good we have in possession, and to the attainment of good that is within our reach.

Here an important question occurs : Is not the spirit of aggressive energy which has seemed to characterize the school in the

past, the result of temporary forces acting at the commencement of the work, which must necessarily disappear as the school becomes consolidated, and the extraordinary impulse of its origin is expended? Is it possible to maintain as a permanent characteristic that vital connection with the living world which has yielded a fruitage of earnest life and character? Is not such a hope in itself unreasonable?

No doubt there was an intensity in the early movements which could spring only from the emergency, and which can never be reproduced in connection with this work. It was appropriate in the circumstances, but can never be a normal condition of life. The circumstances were unusual, and so was the resulting life. It is not desirable that either should be permanent. There was an unusual energy of thought and feeling and action throughout the country during the war of the rebellion. It was the product of the war, and must subside with it. It was desirable and inevitable while the occasion existed, but rest from both is a blessing. So our day of conflict has passed by. But an earnest sympathy with every good work, a controlling interest in human life and its objects, is always to be desired and maintained. This is no extraordinary experience depending upon unusual causes. It is the only wholesome and worthy kind of living—the only force under which generous and effective character can be formed. Such a spirit in our own school it is desirable to maintain, and the prospect of its maintenance is matter of grave concern. Is there ground of hope that our past experience may be continued? There are some things in our institutional arrangements that have contributed to this result thus far, and which seem to be permanent in our constitution. Let us refer to these briefly:

The imbosoming of the College in a sympathizing Christian community—a community itself alive to all living interests, is one of these influential facts. It is not enough that a college be locally near to a thriving people, who can supply the material wants of the youth that gather to its halls. It is of far more consequence that the college form a part of that community and share in its responsibilities—that the churches embrace the young people so as to establish a common religious and social life. In this respect we have been greatly favored, and have every reason to hope for the future.

The school and the place had a common origin, and have a

common history. No jealousies or misunderstandings have prevailed to produce separation. This fact itself, so unusual, requires explanation ; but, whatever the cause, the fact is unquestionable, and is fruitful of good results. Every one belongs in a sense to the community and needs a good standing in it. His circle of personal acquaintance may be small, but he feels the public sentiment and finds an impulse in it. This good understanding we hope to maintain. There is in it a great mutual advantage. A body of students in a community, but not of it, living a separate life, is not in general an element that contributes to good order. Jealousies and antagonisms arise which make the relation uncomfortable. It seems a higher wisdom not to have any partition-walls, but to bring the school and the community under a common responsibility. We have found a blessing in this relation ; some care and thoughtfulness on both sides will be necessary to maintain it, but we have a good beginning and no indications of any interruption.

Contributing to this community of social life is the somewhat peculiar social constitution of the College. Young men and young women have been gathered here together from the beginning, enjoying the common advantages. The arrangement has been regarded with disfavor by many, and with bare toleration by others, even of our friends ; especially those of Eastern education. An experience of a generation should afford some ground for positive opinion, and such opinions are held by those who have shared in the responsibility here. Probably no one of them has ever seriously questioned the desirableness of the system. We have a full conviction that it tends to good order, elevates the standard of college morality, operates as a stimulus to individual exertion, even beyond a system of grades and honors, and not least of all, it secures to the student the wholesome influences of common home-life during his years of education. He finds himself still a member of society, responsible to its sentiment and dependent upon his good name for a fair standing. This all-pervading influence is a mightier restraint than any college police or discipline, and to a great extent removes the necessity for these artificial restraints. Theoretical objections can have little force in the presence of an experience of more than thirty years, giving the same uniform result. Much of the wholesome order and earnest life that have prevailed among us we

attribute, without hesitation, to this feature of our work. It has been a blessing in the past—we expect good from it in the future.

A suggestion has been recently made, that while the system is favorable in its operation upon young men, it must be undesirable for young women—that this mutual association in the classes will give a resultant of character, in which young women lose in delicacy and refinement what young men gain in sobriety and self-respect. The idea could never have sprung from experience, nor from any careful thinking. It is inconceivable that one sex should be elevated by an association which depresses the other. Young women will not be rendered coarse or indelicate by a social life which makes young men generous and chivalrous and self-respectful. Both must rise or fall together. The thought that young women must become masculine and strong-minded by meeting with young men in the class-room and in social life, is an impeachment of divine wisdom. Strength and manliness on one side, and delicacy and gentleness and good sense on the other, are the sure result of the great fact that at the beginning God made us male and female. Masculine character and aspirations in woman are not readily generated in ordinary society. Such views and tendencies have not prevailed here. More than anything else, perhaps, this feature of our system has rendered a community of interest between the college and the community possible and natural.

Another feature in our system is the Preparatory Department, as it is called, embracing large numbers in the earlier stages of education—not children, but young men and women of suitable age to go from home to school. These are here not simply to prepare for the higher departments, but to obtain that general education necessary in private and business life. These young people are direct from their homes, and infuse into our college public sentiment, an element of practical and vigorous life. They are our house of commons; we could not well spare them. They not only afford the material from which our higher classes are supplied, but these primary classes present a field of earnest labor to our most advanced students. The teaching in these classes is done, under the supervision of permanent officers, chiefly by students from the higher classes. In this work forty or fifty of the students of more mature scholarship and character are engaged. In

this relation they become interested in the progress and welfare of those under their care, and are naturally led into labors most interesting and fruitful of good. Sustaining the double relation of teacher and pupil, they accomplish a work which, as students merely, they would not undertake, and which permanent teachers could not do. The system was the outgrowth of our narrow means. The wisdom of it is not merely human. It secures a practical tendency in our best scholars, and trains them to earnest and efficient work, giving them habits of responsible labor, and keeping them in the spirit of it. It secures in the school a permanent and pervading force on the side of good order, as natural and quiet in its operation as it is efficient. It forms a link between faculty and students, establishing a community of interest, and preventing those misunderstandings and antagonisms so frequent and so forbidding. It involves an expenditure of time and strength on the part of those who engage in the work, but its reaction is salutary in discipline and self-culture; it brings its recompense in self-poised and self-reliant scholarship and character.

Closely related to this in its bearing is the arrangement by which our students in large numbers find employment for the winter vacation in the schools of the surrounding country. The extent of this work is almost surprising. Five hundred teachers and more have sometimes gone out in a single year; the large majority disposed and qualified to do a good work. The immediate result to popular education is a matter of great importance. Its effect as a recruiting enterprise for our ranks at home is very marked. But of these, I cannot speak. The reaction upon the character of the young people is the point of special interest. The experience of labor thus afforded — the taste of practical working-life, shows itself in serious and earnest living. It keeps alive the spirit of work and consolidates and strengthens the character. A knowledge of the world and a sympathy with its needs are wrought into their permanent habits of thought and feeling, and render their knowledge of books and their literary culture elements of effective power. Perhaps this feature in the system may explain the passion exhibited by our students for founding and organizing schools and colleges. This arrangement, too, was the outgrowth of pecuniary necessity, and has often been regarded as in itself undesirable. A vacation in summer and study in winter seems to be the natural order, and we have

sometimes envied those who enjoy the privilege. But it is questionable whether we could afford the change, even if the pressure of want were removed. A vacation in summer is for recreation and amusement; the winter vacation brings work—a change of employment, however, which serves some of the purposes of rest. There is ground for apprehension that a transfer of the vacation to the summer months would materially depress the tone of our college life, and in the same degree abate from the efficiency of our educational forces. Desirable as rest during the heat of summer might seem, it may be that our necessity has brought us a blessing.

A Theological Department was in the original plan of the school, and has been one of its prominent features. It has embraced young men of decided character and leading influence, and has tended to diffuse their earnest purpose throughout the school. This relation of the department to the school, opening a field of inviting and effective labor, has reacted upon its members to bring them into harmony with their chosen work, and to keep them in the true spirit of it. The department has paid for itself in this home influence, elevating the tone and spirit of the entire school, and giving to the work the character of a great moral enterprise. Of the direct results accomplished in furnishing to the Christian ministry a goodly number of earnest, self-denying, useful men, who have found a good work to do and have done it, I do not propose to speak. Such men are still in demand, and the call was never more pressing than now. To those who have had responsibility here it has seemed a good place to train up such men. A large school to furnish material, a vigorous spirit of Christian labor animating the large body, many influences favoring the development of Christian activity, a location between the East and the West where Eastern culture and Western enterprise might readily meet, and where Southern destitution opens its wide door—it seems a good point at which to look out upon the great harvest-field, and to equip for the work. Those of us who have had our training in this prophets' school, besides the decided impulse received in the direction of our chosen work, have occasion to make grateful mention of views imparted in theological philosophy, which to our thought illuminate the whole field of theoretical and practical truth—views which, in our judgment, might do

good service in many directions, especially in the struggle between revealed religion and modern rationalism. To many it will sound like vain boasting to suggest that the world cannot afford to let these views die, or that they should have any weight in the practical question of maintaining here an efficient theological school. The Edwardean doctrine of virtue, as modified and elucidated by our venerated Professor in Theology, and scripturally applied and enforced by our patriarch in Biblical instruction, is a part of the inheritance in which we rejoice. We have a strong conviction that it would benefit others as well as ourselves. Theoretical as it is, it lays the foundation of many practical views, and works in admirably in the formation of efficient and practical character. It is doubtful whether the same power for good could have been secured here upon any other philosophy.

The theology of the Fathers of New England, thus freshened and elaborated, has been regarded with suspicion and apprehension, and the suspicion has tended to turn away from us young men entering upon theological study. This prevailing feeling has restricted us in our supply of students almost entirely to our own college graduates. Many of these have already been under training here during a period of six years, and some of them naturally feel inclined to seek the benefit of contact with other men and other views. This tendency has restricted our field still more, and upon this already narrow field the war encroached so as to obliterate entirely the class that should have appeared before you to-day. We cannot believe our work in this direction is completed, or is to be greatly crippled. The matter has been laid before the churches naturally associated with us, and their co-operation is invited. The day of suspicion and distrust should have passed away, so that mutual effort may extend and diffuse the advantages for theological training here afforded. There seems at present no call for additional professional schools here, to constitute a completely equipped University. The idea of the enterprise from the beginning until now has been to afford such education as shall contribute to the great Christian movements of our land and of the world. An attempt to extend the idea would seem rather to destroy its unity and diminish its energy.

One other feature of our work has brought us into connection

with the world without, and has contributed to give direction to our efforts. I refer to the attitude of the College toward the colored people of the land. It is not necessary to review the history. This one fact alone of maintaining equal privileges for the colored race would have saved us from stagnation during the generation past. It has moulded the character of our school in its general influence, and left a lasting impression upon the vast majority of the thousands that have been gathered here. Wherever found they are the intelligent and constant advocates of freedom and justice for the colored man. No special effort has been required to secure this result—no persistent course of instruction. It has grown out of the simple fact that our students have looked in the face those who have suffered the wrong, and have felt the injustice. It has been a privilege to the colored student to be admitted here. It has been an equal blessing to his white brother to be so educated as to take naturally a right position on the great question of our country and our time. Our educational work would have been greatly marred if this element had been omitted. But it is not a fact of the past alone: it reaches into the future. The work of the education and enfranchisement of the colored people is before us for another generation. The war has not completed, but merely introduced it. A share in this work is laid upon us, in the providence of God, by our constitution and our history. We cannot withdraw from the conflict if we would. We are not to stand alone as heretofore in receiving colored students; every Northern school will open its doors, technically, if not practically, and gradually the fact will cease to be a reproach or a distinction. Even now a colored young man is in the middle of his course at Harvard, who, two years ago, was represented in an Eastern paper as uncomfortable under the prejudice at Oberlin! But we are bound to the work as other schools are not. The field is open to us, and it is impossible that we should not enter in. This call is our birthright and heritage, and is among the influences which for years to come shall inspire the place, the College, and the people with the earnest working spirit.

But all these internal arrangements and outward relations will avail to hold us to a course of progressive Christian activity, only as the individual and collective Christian life of students and

teachers and people shall respond to the call that is upon us. If the people and the churches shall become absorbed in the business and movements connected with the outward prosperity of the place, and drop the work of Christian education and enterprise which is laid upon us, the future cannot prove fruitful of good as the past has been. The College cannot be separated from the place in spirit and action, and if it could be it would lose half its power. It is not enough that the people see that their own prosperity depends upon that of the College, and respond in generous material support. This is much and is essential, but even this will not be secured without a hearty sympathy in the great work of Christian education, which is our special call and privilege. It is this higher community of interest which must unite in permanent bonds the school and the people.

If the teachers and officers of the school should lose their warm interest in the great Gospel enterprises of our time, and should become occupied with their studies and calling simply as intellectual pursuits, rather than as involving the higher interests of men and of the kingdom of God, the character of the work would be greatly changed. A school can be kept up to a warm and earnest sympathy with the great interests of life only under the impulse of men who themselves live in those interests.

If our students should fail in their share of the responsibility, and allow the trivial matters which sometimes encroach upon student life to exclude the aims and purposes which are more generous and more excellent, the result would be equally disastrous. There is no mightier force in determining the character of a school, than that of the students themselves. Our school was fortunate in the beginning, in a class of young people who came with serious views of life, and impressed their own character upon our College arrangements and institutions. Down to the present time we have been favored with young people who have accepted these traditional habits, and have improved and extended them. Such associations and impulses, transmitted to us through several generations of students, are a rich heritage more valuable to our school than endowment funds. The maintenance of these wholesome and elevating associations is the responsibility of the students of coming years.

Nor is it a question to be determined solely by those who are gathered at this centre. The life of the churches of the land will be represented in the students that come in upon us. Coming from Christian homes and Christian communities, awake to all the interests that give value and significance to life, they will bring a blessing with them. These halls and walks and shades will become instinct with their noble spirit, and surround those who shall succeed them as with a vital atmosphere of good. A single generation coming in upon us, destitute of these impulses, with low aspirations and sordid views of life, would do much to extinguish this hereditary good.

Such are the treasures which the past hands down to us, such the responsibilities of the present and the hopes and encouragements for the future. We may go forward with the assurance that He who has laid the work upon us will not fail those who commit to him their way, with the prayer that the work of their hands may be established.

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